

4/15/2013

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rachel Metzger. Spell last name.

I am here today because I strongly support Medicaid expansion and have seen the effects of access to health care in my own life. I have never testified at the legislature before, but feel so strongly that I decided to be here today. I live in Lolo, Montana with my fiancée and our three kids.

About ten years ago, I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia. At the time, I was working a minimum wage job and health insurance was not an option. So, for a long time my condition went untreated. Fibromyalgia requires frequent doctor's visits to find a treatment plan that works and frequent trips to the doctor were simply impossible to pay for out of pocket.

Fibromyalgia is an exhausting condition and it was hard to just keep up with my kids - my eight year old is a cheerleader and I home teach my five-year-old preschool. It was a struggle just to do everyday things like go to the grocery store, clean my house, let alone work as a waitress lifting heavy trays or as a CNA and I ended up working less and less. over the years.

A few months ago I became eligible for Medicaid and began treating my condition. It has made a huge difference for me and my family. Medicaid has allowed me to work with my doctor to find a new medication that is beginning to work for me and now, and there are a few hours in the day when I am filled with energy. I am able to keep up with my children and be an active parent. Soon, I am starting physical therapy, which should further help.

I will live with this condition for the rest of my life and if I don't learn to manage it now, I can't imagine how it will be in 20 years. Treatment now is so important for me to be able to lead a full life as my kids grow up.

Medicaid has made the difference. But it also means if I make over \$200.00 a month, I will lose eligibility and lose treatment. If we expand Medicaid, it means that I could both get treatment and work, which would be better for me and my family's future.

So I ask you today to support SB 395 and expand Medicaid eligibility in Montana.

Thank you for your time and this opportunity to testify.